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# THE STEEL KING

A COMEDY-DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY

HORACE C. DALE

DICK & FITZGERALD

PUBLISHERS

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DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers, 18 Ann St., N. Y.

# *The Steel King*

AN ORIGINAL FOUR-ACT  
COMEDY DRAMA

BY HORACE C. DALE

*Author of "Strife," "Imogene," "The Deacon," "Breaking His  
Bonds," "Josiah's Courtship," "The Deacon's Tribulations,"  
"A White Lie," "The Gypsy Queen," etc.*

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NEW YORK

*Dick & Fitzgerald*

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# The Steel King.

NOTE.—The acting rights of this play are expressly reserved by the author. Theatrical managers wishing to produce it should apply to the author, in care of the publisher. Amateur representation may be made without such application, and without charge.

## CHARACTERS.

HENRY REBER,	.	.	.	the "Steel King."
GEORGE GREEN,	.	.	.	lawyer and lover.
CHAS. HENRY,	.	.	.	a mechanic.
BILL ANTHONY,	.	.	.	a staunch Union man.
ANDY CROW,	.	.	.	black, inside and out.
MAUD SEFTON,	.	.	.	with a purpose in life.
MOTHER GRUNDY,	.	.	.	chemist and clairvoyant.
DIMPLE DARLING,	.	.	.	nobody's fool.
NELLIE ANTHONY,	.	.	.	Bill's daughter.
1ST POLICEMAN	}			
2D POLICEMAN				
SINGERS, SOLDIERS and MOB,				by the company.

Time, the present ; locality, Rome, Ga.

*Time of representation, two hours and a quarter.*

## SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

ACT I.—SCENE 1. The mechanic's home. A startling bit of heart interest. Hints of a storm brewing. The dynamite bomb. Vengeance threatened. A test of will power. "Thank God, I've triumphed again!"

SCENE 2. A street. A labor champion and a black knight exchange compliments. Labor presents her grievances, suggests a remedy, wins a convert.

SCENE 3. The Steel King's home. An appeal. A determined man. Explanation. "So down town I go, if that means to my death." "Then, sir, you'll have to use force in leaving this room."

ACT II.—SCENE 1. Same as Scene 1, Act I. A vision. A startled visitor. Hatred expressed, vengeance implored. Clouded faculties. Mischief brewing. Assistance sought and promised. Another mental tilt between mother and son.

SCENE 2. A street. Andy angers Dimple. Lively skirmishing. The black knight bends the knee to the conqueror. Henry is assaulted.



## The Steel King.

SCENE 3. Exterior of Reber's residence. The two spies. The black knight scores a point against Dimple. Mutterings of an approaching storm. Consternation. The mob's attack. The mechanic to the rescue. The troops arrive. A heroic sacrifice. "If you must shoot, direct your men to send their volley into me."

ACT III.—SCENE 1. Same as Scene 3, Act I. A sadly distressed man. A noble proposition. An interruption. A mental fencing match. An appeal for mercy. Irritating insinuations. "What wrong have I done you?" An amateur photographer. An interesting scene. The snap shot. The black knight in a calculating mood. Throws down the gauntlet to Dimple. Hot shot thrown into his camp by Reber. Anthony appears. Explanations demanded. An object lesson. An attempted bribe. "I'll never prove a traitor to my fellow-workmen." A startling intruder. "Then you die." "Your arm is paralyzed."

ACT IV.—SCENE 1. Corridor in Reber's house. Awaiting developments. Andy arrives with coveted news. Re-enforcements hurry to Henry's relief. Andy arouses Dimple's ire. Proposes a divvy.

SCENE 2. Same as Scene 1, Act I. The attack. Overpowered. Bill reverses scene. An infuriated woman. Minions of the law beat a hasty retreat. Threatened vengeance. A terrible arraignment. Startling revelations. A conscience-stricken victim. Res-titution promised. Forgiveness implored.

### COSTUME PLOT.

REBER. ACT I.—Black Prince Albert coat, vest and trousers. Dark tie. Patent leather shoes, silk hat, gloves. ACT II.—Suit to imitate above, minus hat, coat and vest badly torn. ACT III.—Handsome house coat, light trousers. ACT IV.—Light trousers, black Prince Albert coat, silk hat. Fine silver-grey side-whiskers and moustache, silver-grey wig with part.

GREEN. ACT I.—Black Prince Albert coat, light trousers and tie, patent leather shoes. ACT II. First entrance, Regulation army uniform and cap. Second entrance, same with sword buckled on. ACT III.—Light business suit. ACT IV.—first entrance, same as Act III with hat and gloves in hand. Second entrance, same as first entrance. Fine light wig with part, light moustache.

HENRY. ACT I.—Neat house coat, light vest and trousers. Percalé shirt and collar, light tie, Congress shoes. ACT II.—first entrance, same as Act I. Second entrance, neat dark sack coat, black Derby hat. Third entrance, same. ACT III.—Same as third entrance, Act II, minus hat. ACT IV.—Same as Act III, hat on in entering house, fine black curly wig with part, black moustache.

ANTHONY. ACT I.—Seedy brown trousers, loose fitting, well-



worn dark coat, gray flannel shirt with dark four-in-hand tie, dilapidated shoes run down at heels, light slouch hat. ACT II.—First entrance, same as Act I. Second entrance, hat and coat off. ACT III.—Same as Act I, minus hat. ACT IV.—Same as Act I. Hat knocked off in tussle with officers. Rough, short-cropped brown wig, stubby beard and moustache of a few weeks' growth. Features made up to show the effect of strong drink.

CROW. ACTS I, II, III, and IV.—Light checked trousers, negligee shirt, gaudy tie, linen sack coat, light slouch hat. Hat off in house scenes. Darky wig.

MAUD.—ACT I.—Handsome house dress of light material. ACT II.—First entrance, fine summer outdoor dress with hat and gloves to match. Second entrance, same without hat and gloves. ACT III.—Pretty morning house dress of light material. ACT IV.—Tailor-made suit with hat and gloves. Fine modern chestnut wig.

MOTHER GRUNDY. ACTS I, II, III, and IV.—Dark dress, dark hood and shawl—on in Act III, to be thrown off in Act IV. Grey mixed wig.

DIMPLE. ACT II.—Light summer street dress, pretty light hat. ACT III.—Pretty house dress. ACT IV.—First entrance, same as Act III. Second entrance, hat on. Fine modern black curly wig.

NELLIE. Faded calico dress, old shoes, blond curly wig.

POLICEMEN. Blue sack suits. Helmets. Stars.

SOLDIERS. Regulation uniform.

MOB. Grey, red, and blue flannel shirts. Some men with and without coats. Hats and trousers of various cuts, shapes, and colors, in general appearance rough and repulsive.

## PROPERTY PLOT.

ACT I.—SCENE 1. Setting as per description. SCENE 3. Setting to be as fine and elaborate as house can afford. Table and chairs down L. C., screen up L. Silk hat for REBER.

ACT II.—SCENE 1. Setting as per Scene 1, Act I, minus dynamite balls. Broad-brimmed light hat, black beard and moustache, long light coat, sword and belt for MOTHER GRUNDY. SCENE 3. Large armchair, palm-leaf fan. Hat for GREEN. Tattered coat for REBER, same style and color as worn in Act I. Clubs, hammers, pitchforks, axes, ropes, etc., for MOB. Revolver loaded with blank cartridges for MAUD. Rifles with fixed bayonets for SOLDIERS. Sword and belt for GREEN.

ACT III.—Setting as in SCENE 3, Act I. Small camera for ANDY. Bell for use off L. Black ball to represent dynamite bomb for MOTHER GRUNDY.

ACT IV.—SCENE 1. Hat for GREEN. Gloves for MAUD. Hat for ANDY. Photo for ANDY.

# The Steel King.

## SCENE PLOT.

ACT I.—SCENE 1. Cottage interior in 3 G. backed by woods in 4 G. Practical door R. in F., window L. Green baize down. Lights low. SCENE 2. A street in 1. G. SCENE 3. Fancy interior in 3 G. Practical door C. in F. backed by corridor in 4 G. or landscape effect. Medallion carpet.

ACT II.—SCENE 1. Same as Scene 1, Act I. SCENE 2. Street in 1 G. SCENE 3. Exterior, set as per description if possible, otherwise set house across L. Green baize down. Lights low.

ACT III.—SCENE. Same as Scene 3, Act I. Lights up.

ACT IV.—SCENE 1. Corridor in 1 g. Lights up. SCENE 2. Same as Scene 1, Act I. Lights up. Lamp out.

## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

In observing, the player is supposed to face the audience. C. means centre; R., right; L., left; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre; C. D., centre door; R. D., right door; L. D., left door; D. R. C., door right of centre; D. L. C., door left of centre; D. F., door in the flat; C. D. F., centre door in flat; R. D. F., right door in flat; L. D. F., left door in flat; 1 G., 2 G., 3 G., etc., first, second or third groove, etc.; 1 E., 2 E., 3 E., etc., first, second or third entrance, etc.; R. U. E., right upper entrance; L. U. E., left upper entrance; UP, up stage or toward the rear; DOWN, down stage or towards the audience; X., means to cross the stage; X. R., cross to the right; X. L., cross to the left.

R.            R. C.            C.            L. C.            L.

# The Steel King.

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—Cottage in 3 G., backed by wood in 4 G. Practical door R. and window L. in flat. Plain table C. with lamp lighted; small brass apothecary scales; retort arranged with filter paper and liquid dropping from it into a large graduate; several different sized graduates; 4 quart bottles partially filled with different colored liquids; a number of smaller bottles, some filled and others empty; a mortar with pestle in it; a blow-pipe; open well-thumbed pharmacopeia with lead pencil and sheet of foolscap paper covered with calculations upon it, and a half-dozen round black balls the size of a walnut upon it. Pedestal or stand up L. corner, with semi-circular tiers of shelving resting upon it, upon which are a number of small glass jars containing air-slacked lime, flour, sugar, tea leaves and different colored sands. Lounge, several plain chairs around room. A large arm chair with leather cushion directly back of table C. Green baize down. Lights low. Time, twilight. Curtain rises to soft music. MOTHER GRUNDY is seated in arm chair, slightly bending over open book; with pencil in hand she rapidly scans calculation upon sheet of paper.

MOTHER G. (*dropping pencil and rubbing hands gleefully*). There! I've verified that calculation for the hundredth time and can't detect a flaw in it. I'm within sight of my goal, and soon there'll be revealed to me the secret which has baffled the skill of cunning alchemists for ages. I'll turn out pure gold by the ton, banish poverty and make every workingman, woman and child a millionaire. (*Rises, laughing hysterically*.) Ha—ha—ha—I'll do it! I'll do it! (*Calls.*) Charlie!

*Enter* CHARLES HENRY R. 2 E.

HENRY (*cheerily*). What is it, mother? Are things coming your way?

MOTHER G. Yes, my boy, they are indeed. Soon you'll be the richest man in the world.

HENRY. Then you'll be the happiest woman.

MOTHER G. Don't be too sure of that. How about the other one now tugging at your heart strings?

HENRY (*surprised*). What do you mean, mother? What do you know? Who has been talking to you about me?

MOTHER G. No one—not a soul. I've noted your new found love in your eyes—seen her walking by your side—

## The Steel King.

HENRY. Where? When?

MOTHER G. Here in this house—whenever you are around me. I feel her presence now. Ah, I see her, too! She's standing by your side—a vision of surpassing loveliness! Shall I describe her?

HENRY (*quickly*). No, no, mother, please don't. You make cold chills creep over me. (*Starts to cross L.*)

MOTHER G. (*tenderly*). Your sweetheart is a rich, brave, beautiful woman and loves you dearly. In a vision to-day, I saw her save your life. You were about to be killed by a set of infuriated men, suddenly she appeared by your side. Stepping in front of you with flashing eyes and a regal air that challenged admiration she denounced your would-be slayers as a set of arrant cowards, and declared you could only be reached over her mangled form. She appeared the incarnation of purity and fearlessness. The grandeur of her daring act of devotion cowed your enemies and one by one they shrank away as though heartily ashamed of themselves. What did that scene portend? (*anxiously*.) Have you done anything to arouse the enmity of your fellow-workmen?

HENRY. Nothing, mother, but to strongly advise against any act of lawlessness. (*At table, picks up a black ball.*) What is this?

MOTHER G. A dynamite bomb. (*HARRY hastily replaces it upon table, steps R.*)

HENRY (*searchingly*). What is it intended for?

MOTHER G. (*evasively*). Ask no questions and I'll tell no lies.

HENRY. Was Bill Anthony here to-day?

MOTHER G. He was not.

HENRY. Any of his friends?

MOTHER G. No. Why do you ask?

HENRY. Because there is trouble brewing, and you and I must steer clear of it. Bill has been drinking heavily and is bent upon some devilish mischief. I was told he was coming here to consult you as to the best plan for carrying out his designs for revenge. I'd like you to persuade him not to violate the law, or jeopardize the life or property of a fellow-being. You can do it. Will you?

MOTHER G. Is he aiming at Reber?

HENRY. Yes, mother, I'll be frank with you; he is.

MOTHER G. (*determinedly*). Then I'll not lift my little finger to save his property or even his life. (*Strongly*). He's a scoundrel! A fiend in human form and a robber of widows and orphans. His life is a lie, and his wealth a garment his master, the devil, has wrapped around him—(*laughs wildly*). Ha—ha—ha! I help Reber! Never, till his black heart changes and justice be done me and mine.

HENRY (*warningly*). Mother!

MOTHER G. (*unheedingly*). Let his men call, I'll advise what to do. I'll—(*hastily picks up a black ball from table*).

HENRY (*with power*). Not another word, mother. Don't you *dare* give utterance to such a diabolical purpose. Replace that ball this instant. (MOTHER G. *obeys*). You are beside yourself. Now promise to do what I asked.

MOTHER G. (*determinedly*). Never!

HENRY (*warningly*). Mother!

MOTHER G. (*strongly*). I won't do it. (*Edges down L. of table, ditto HENRY down L.*)

HENRY (*determinedly*). You must.

MOTHER G. (*wildly*). I won't, I tell you!

HENRY (*warningly*). Mother, don't compel me to adopt harsh measures with you.

MOTHER G. (*front of table*). I won't—I won't—

HENRY (*front of table, strongly*). You shall do it. You force me to make you do it. (*Seizes MOTHER G. by arm and compels her to face him*). Look me in the eyes! You shall do it! I command you to do it! (*Looks determinedly into MOTHER G.'s eyes a moment*). Will you obey me? (MOTHER G.'s *head drops upon HENRY'S bosom*).

MOTHER G. (*sobbing*). I'll—do—it. Yes, I'll do it.

HENRY (*with ringing emphasis*). Thank God I've triumphed again.

*Quick close in with street in I. G. which is*

SCENE II.—*whistling heard off L. I. E.*

*Enter ANDY L. I. E. whistling "Dixie," at same instant enter BILL ANTHONY R. I. E. They pass at C.*

ANDY (*as he passes*). Hello, Bill. (*crosses R. whistling. BILL stops and looks after ANDY.*)

BILL (*calling*). Say, young fellow. (ANDY *stops*.) Come here. (ANDY *returns to C.*)

ANDY. What's up?

BILL. Say, are you a member of the union?

ANDY (*puzzled*). Member ob de union? (*Brightens up.*) Yo' jist bet I is. Ole Uncle Abe Lincoln made me dat way back in de sixties. Say, am yo'r block in good runnin' order? (*Laughs.*)

BILL. I didn't mean a member of the United States, you sassy black nigger, but of a labor union.

ANDY (*nettled*). Since yo' am so flip wid yo'r tongue I'll jist tell yo' dat it am none ob yo'r biznis wedder I is or not, ole mongrel.

BILL (*angrily*). What do you mean by classing me with the brute creation? Do you know what a mongrel means?

ANDY. Ob course I does. It's de opposite ob a (*pointing to self*) thoroughbred, a sort o' cross, betwixt an' between, 'neider one thing nor de oder. Say, did you' eber see my piebald pup wid his water-spaniel ears, rat-terrier nose an' feet, bull-dog mouf, p'inter tail an' Newfoundland fur? Well, he's a mongrel.



BILL (*menacing*). Do you mean to say that I look like your infernal pup?

ANDY (*emphatically*). No, siree. Yo' am not in de same class wid my pup. Dar's style an pride about him, an' he's 'spectable. Nuffin' ob de low-down cut-throat 'bout my pup. If he looked like yo' he'd been water-logged in a coffee sack long ago. (*Chuckles.*)

BILL (*starting R.*). You infernal black rascal, I'll——

ANDY (*running R.*). No yo' won't, 'taint no use yo'r tryin'. (*BILL stops, ANDY near R. I. E.*). Say, Bill, if yo' don't want a feller to question yo'r color, why don't yo' stop drinkin' whiskey or smear on a coat ob whitewash? As yo' is yo' am neider a red or a white man.

BILL (*shaking fist*). If ever I lay my hands on you I'll make you pay dearly for your insults. You are the sassiest nigger in this town.

ANDY. An' yo' am de biggest rummy. If yo' wus to die now, ole Nick wouldn't hab much fun wid yo', fur yo' would go up like a tinder box. A sizz an' a flutter, an' all would be ober 'cept de house-cleanin' to get rid ob de smell. Why don't you let rum alone an' jine Miss Maud's mission. She'll help yo' git work an' make a man out ob yo'.

BILL. I've no use for help in her line. All I want is a chance to earn a living by my trade. If your hound of a master don't soon open his factory doors and give us back our old jobs he'll be as poor as some of the rest of us.

ANDY. Let me gib yo' a pinter, Bill. Yo' will never move de ole man by threats.

BILL. Then he and his class will have to take the consequences. If the laboring men are not to be permitted to earn a living when they are willing to work, then by heaven, the wealthy class must be stripped of their riches and brought down to our level. No true-born American will allow a class of lords and serfs to exist in this free country.

ANDY (*gleefully*). Now yo' are a-talkin'. Dat's de stuff ! Gib me sum more. It's good fur de blood.

BILL. No sensible wage-earner objects to another man's having more of this world's goods than he possesses, but he does object to its power being used as a means for grinding down, starving and sweating out great drops of gold from his fellowmen to increase his wealth. Every man who puts a dollar into business has a right to expect a fair rate of interest for the money he risks, but he has no right to make that dollar bring him in ten inside of a year at the expense of men he employs by paying them starvation wages.

ANDY. Right yo' are agin, Bill.

BILL. There ought to be a law to prevent such injustice. It's the curse of our nation. Capital has labor by the throat and is

strangling the goose which lays the golden eggs. It regulates the price of labor, the price of goods labor turns out, and the amount of its output. It controls our courts, our press, and buys outright elections. It will soon begin to tax the poor for the air they breathe and the religion they profess. It's time to call a halt to the money power with its trusts, monopolies and combinations, or this country will cease to be the "home of the brave, and the land of the free."

ANDY (*running L. and extending hand*). By golly, Bill, but yo' am a spouter. Gib me yo'r hand—(*Is about to shake hands with BILL, then quickly backs away a step*). Say, yo', yo' didn't mean what yo' said 'bout lickin' me, did yo'?

BILL. No, we'll let that pass.

ANDY (*extending hand*). Den shake, ole boy, shake. How do yo' 'spect to bring 'bout a different state ob affairs?

BILL. It can only be done by legislation. By the laboring classes combining, going to the polls, and electing honest men to office who will enact laws for the commonweal of all and grant special privileges to none.

ANDY. Kin men be found dat money can't buy?

BILL. They can easily be manufactured.

ANDY (*puzzled*). How?

BILL. By shooting every officeholder who proves false to his pledges and to the men who placed him in power.

ANDY (*whistles*). Whew! Den dis coon will keep out ob politics.

BILL. Heroic measures are necessary to stamp out the plague of official corruption if our government is to return to one "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

ANDY. Right yo' am dar, an' yo' kin put me down to jine yo'r union, an' to help bring dat 'bout. (*Orchestra strikes chord of "Rally Round the Flag."* BILL and ANDY with a chorus of voices off R. I. E. commence singing),

"The union for ever, hurrah, boys, hurrah,  
Down with the traitors and up with the stars,  
Then we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally round again,  
Shouting the battle cry of freedom."

(BILL and ANDY lock arms, start R. waving hats, and at conclusion of chorus exeunt R. I. E. Chorus repeated off with receding effect.

*Flats are drawn off disclosing*

SCENE III.—*Reception room in REBER'S house, Stage setting to be as handsome in all respects as means will allow. REBER down L. C. silk hat in hand, GREEN R. C. toying with watch chain, MAUD C.*

GREEN. Miss Sefton has given you prudent advice, Mr. Reber, and I think it would be wise for you to heed it.

MAUD (*advancing and laying left hand upon REBER'S*



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*shoulder*). Please do what I ask. Don't go down town to-night.

REBER (*slightly irritated*). But I must, Maud. I have an important appointment to meet.

MAUD (*pleadingly*). It surely is not of so much importance that you need risk life or limb in keeping it. The streets are filled with angry, excited men, and your presence will increase their frenzy. Please remain at home and ease my fears.

REBER. It is hard for me to refuse you, Maud, but my appointment *must* be kept. I think you are needlessly alarmed. No one will dare molest me.

MAUD. When the passions of men are aroused, nothing is sacred. I feel that you are taking your life in your hand by leaving home to-night. Will nothing move you from your purpose?

REBER. Nothing, absolutely nothing. There is no white blood in my veins. Why should I fear the passions of my locked-out men? (MAUD *goes up C. appears determined*). I've only adhered to strict business principles. My plant was closed because my men refused to work upon a contract I accepted from Dunn & Co. whose men were on a strike. Business had been dull for some time, and I had been running my works at a positive loss of one thousand dollars a month, and thought seriously of closing up my shops when Dunn's contract was offered me. I knew that by accepting it I could give my men steady employment for months to come and thought I would thus be helping them to support their unfortunate brothers out of work. What was the outcome. My men threw down their tools and refused to do the work. I called them together, explained the situation and pointed out the advantages that would accrue to them and their fellow-men on a strike if *they* continued at their posts, but all to no avail. My statements as to business conditions were not believed, my motives in accepting Dunn's contract were called in question, and I was accused of trying to turn my works into scab shops. Failing to get my men to do Dunn's work, and not wishing to bankrupt myself, I ordered my mills to be closed. That is a statement of the trouble between my men and myself in a nutshell. I have only done what any other sensible man in my employ would have done had he been in my position, and there is no justice in the abuse which has been heaped upon me. I've done nothing to merit bodily injury at the hands of my men—(*strongly*) so down town I go, if that means to my death. (*Starts up C.* MAUD *quickly goes up C., stands in front of door, voice, form, and features depicting intense determination*).

MAUD. Then, sir, you'll have to use force in leaving this room, for I'll never be a party to your suicidal resolve. (*Defiantly extends arms across door to bar REBER'S exit.* REBER L. C., GREEN R. C. *silently applauding.*

QUICK DROP.

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *Same as Scene I, Act I. Dynamite balls have disappeared from table. MOTHER G., seated at table in easy chair in clairvoyant state. Curtain rises to weird, plaintive music.*

MOTHER G. (*strained voice*). It's not clear to me what the scene means. (*Slightly leans forward as though trying to discover something in the distance.*) I see groups of men standing upon street corners gesticulating wildly, and many others scurrying to and fro in a great state of excitement. A dense cloud of mist hangs between us through which I cannot penetrate. Ah, what do I see! (*Brightens up.*) Charlie's sweetheart emerging from the cloud riding a wind horse. She's coming this way bearing a message, and is excitedly urging her steed to his utmost speed. He carries her through space with the rapidity of a meteor. (*Rapidly.*) They've left the town, crossed the river, turned the brow of the hill, are passing our house—(*Excitedly, half rising.*) No, see, they stop! (*Raps are heard upon door R. in Flat.*) MOTHER G. *sinks back in chair, shudders, passes right hand over face. Raps are repeated.*)

MOTHER G. (*starting, speaks naturally*). What's that? (*Listens, raps are repeated.*) Some one is knocking. Come in, (*Rises.*)

*Enter MAUD door in Flat. Appears excited.*

MAUD (*quickly*). Good evening. Is Mr. Henry in?

MOTHER G. He is.

MAUD. Can I see him?

MOTHER G. You can. Was he expecting a call from you?

MAUD. No, my presence is due to a hastily formed resolve.

MOTHER G. Well, I knew you were coming, saw you leave town, cross the river, turn the brow of the hill and stop at our door. Does that surprise you? stranger things than that have happened. You've been here before. (MAUD *shakes her head, no.*) Yes, you have, I tell you. Not in your corporeal form, perhaps, but your spiritual essence has often glided over this floor. Not an hour ago it stood on the same spot you now occupy. Come, place your hand in mine and let me tell you what the future holds in store for you.

MAUD (*alarmed*). Excuse me,—but—I'd rather—not. (*Quickly.*) Will you please call Mr. Henry. My business with him is urgent.

## The Steel King.

MOTHER G. What is the excitement down town about ?

MAUD. The labor classes are rising. A riot is imminent. I fear arson and bloodshed.

MOTHER G. Whose property is threatened ?

MAUD. Mr. Reber's.

MOTHER G. (*excitedly*). Do you mean Henry Reber, the Steel King ?

MAUD. I do, but why does that excite you ?

MOTHER G. (*with force*). Then I hope his mills and his palatial residence will be levelled to the earth, his mines flooded, and he stripped of his ill-gotten wealth. He's an unprincipled robber. (*Ironically.*) Oh, no. I'll not *advise* his men to burn and destroy, but—(*with intense power*) I hope they will do it. (*Abruptly.*) I'll call Mr. Henry. (*Crosses up R. gleefully rubbing hands.* MAUD, *terrified, retreats a few steps L.*) So justice is about to be done me. Good ! (*When near R. U. E.*)

*Enter Henry R. U. E.*

MOTHER G. (*bowing and indicating MAUD*). A lady to see you, (*Exit R. 2E.*)

Henry (*crosses L.*). Miss Sefton, this is indeed a surprise. May I ask what brought you here ?

MAUD. A pressing need for your help. (*Anxiously.*) Our worst fears are about to be realized. Mr. Reber's men are bent upon mischief, and he has foolishly gone down town. Knowing your influence with the men I hurried here to see if I couldn't prevail upon you to follow him, and, if possible, protect him from bodily injury.

HENRY (*quickly*). Certainly, I will. I'll get my hat and return with you instantly. (*Starts R., is arrested by MAUD'S question.*)

MAUD. One moment, please. Who was that woman who left us ?

HENRY. My mother.

MAUD (*horrified*). Your mother !

HENRY. Yes, Miss Sefton. (*Anxiously.*) What did she say to you ? (*MAUD appears embarrassed.*) Never mind answering that question. I'm sorry she impressed you so unfavorably, yet I'm sure you'll make allowances for her when I tell you—(*brokenly*) that her—mind—is unbalanced. She has had a heavy cross to bear the last eighteen years, and her reason gave way under the strain. Now you understand why I avoided your questions in regard to my domestic affairs. I did not want you to know of my misery. Since you have discovered one of my secrets, I'll make an explanation that you may the better understand some other matters.

MAUD. Tell me nothing likely to give you pain. I did not come here to pry into your family secrets.

HENRY. That I'm sure of, yet what I am about to tell you will set some other matters straight (*speaks rapidly*). Before mother's mind became affected she had two hobbies—chemistry and clair-

voyance—both of which assumed intense form after her great misfortunes. Hoping to relieve her mind by employment I set up this humble laboratory and encouraged her to make experiments in her favorite study. It has proved a source of great relief to her. Her other hobby led her to take up fortune-telling. While its practice fills me with disgust I dare not forbid her indulging in it, for it does much to divert her mind from the sorrow which impaired her reason. She is not generally known as my mother, for it is one of her whims to be called Mother Grundy. Have I explained enough to place mother in a better light?

MAUD. You certainly have. Was she ever examined with a view of being cured of her trouble?

HENRY. Yes. An expert has assured me that the righting of the foul wrong done her would restore her reason.

MAUD. Are you working to that end?

HENRY. I'm doing the best I can.

MAUD. Can't I help you in any way?

HENRY. Not at present, thank you.

MOTHER G. (*Off R. U. E.*) Ha—ha—ha!

HENRY (*startled*). Hark!

MOTHER G. (*Off R. U. E.*). I'll lead the men myself and set them an example. Ha—ha—ha!

HENRY (*alarmed*). Mother is concocting some scheme which must be nipped in the bud. Are you afraid to return home alone?

MAUD. Certainly not. No one will molest me.

HENRY (*speaking earnestly and rapidly*). Then I must ask you to leave me at once, for I must deal with mother alone. (*Goes quickly to door in Flat and opens it. MAUD follows him.*) You can depend upon me to follow as speedily as possible and to carry out your wishes. (*Bows as MAUD quickly exits. Closes door and goes down back of table C.*) How shall I proceed?

*Re-enter MOTHER GRUNDY R. U. E., head slightly bent forward, eyes cast upon floor. Has on broad-brimmed light hat, black beard and moustache, long light coat buttoned up to chin and sword buckled around waist. HENRY pretends to be examining book upon table, but casts sidelong glances at MOTHER GRUNDY.*

MOTHER G. I'll show them how to be a leader. Ha—ha—ha! (*Starts for door in Flat.*)

HENRY (*startlingly*). Mother, where are you going? (*MOTHER G. starts, quickly snatches off hat, beard and moustache with right hand and places them behind her, while trying with left hand to conceal sword with skirts.*)

MOTHER G. (*sheepishly*). Nowhere.

HENRY. Come here. (*MOTHER G. goes down C. HENRY meets her at back of easy chair.*) Give me that hat, beard, and moustache. Now take off that sword and coat and let me have them. (*MOTHER G. obeys. HENRY lays articles on floor, coat on top.*) Did you think you were going to a masquerade ball?

## The Steel King.

MOTHER G. (*ill at ease*). No, I was going to attack our common enemy.

HENRY. And spoil all my nicely laid plans, eh? Have you lost faith in your son?

MOTHER G. He moves too slowly. It takes him too long to strike.

HENRY (*tenderly seating MOTHER G. in easy chair*). He moves slowly because hasty action would ruin his plans. (*Stands back of chair, voice sympathetic, features depicting intense determination, hands rapidly passing over MOTHER GRUNDY'S brows and temples.*) You are very tired, mother.

MOTHER G. I know I am.

HENRY. And sleepy too.

MOTHER G. (*yawning*). That's true. A drowsy—feeling—is—creeping—over—me.

HENRY. Then go to sleep. (*Peers into face from back of chair.*) That's right, close your eyes. A refreshing nap is what you need. (*Determinedly.*) Go to sleep and don't stir until I call you. (*Makes a few passes over MOTHER G.'s face, steps L., picks up coat and tenderly places it beneath his mother's head for a pillow, arranges her comfortably in chair, then surveys her for an instant.*) My victory was easier than I expected. You look comfortable, and are secure from mischief-making for this night. (*Quickly.*) I'll get my hat, lock up the house, and try to overtake Miss Sefton. (*Starts quickly R.*)

*Quick close in with street in G. which is*

SCENE 2.—*A slight scuffle heard off L. I. E.*

ANDY (*warningly off L. I. E.*). Lookout dar! Yo' come nigh shovin' me in de dirty gutter.

DIMPLE (*off L. I. E., warmly*). I wish I had. I wish I could shove you headforemost into the river.

ANDY (*tantalizingly*). Yo' do, eh?

DIMPLE (*angrily*). Yes, I do. What is your object in following me?

ANDY. To protect yo', of course. 'Tain't safe fur a Dimple darlin' to be on de street at night like dis.

DIMPLE. I'm able to take care of myself, and I want you to go about your business and stop prying into my affairs. If you don't (*firmly*) there'll be trouble in store for you. I've spoken. Remember.

*Enter DIMPLE briskly L. I. E., followed by ANDY. When DIMPLE reaches C. she glances over left shoulder, stops abruptly, turns L. ANDY at L. C.*

DIMPLE (*irritated*). Don't you intend following my advice?

ANDY (*grinning*). Yes, when I'se good and ready.

DIMPLE (*hotly*). You're the most exasperating little nigger I ever ran across!

ANDY (*coolly*). Where am yo' goin'?



DIMPLE (*furious*). None of your business.

ANDY. Yo' needn't 'spect to meet Brass Buttons on de street to-night fur I seed him all rigged out in his soger finery, spoonin' wid Miss Maud.

DIMPLE (*affecting indifference*). Ah, indeed. Is that a fact? So you have been playing the spy on Miss Maud, too, have you (*significantly shaking finger at ANDY*)? Let me tell you something. There'll be an interesting scene to-morrow morning when Miss Maud calls you to account for what you've told me.

ANDY (*alarmed*). Don't yo' go an' blab on me! 'Tain't a word ob truf in what I told yo'. Yo'll kick up an awful row.

DIMPLE (*pleased*). I know I will, but that row will be a tame affair compared to the one which will follow when Mr. Reber is told that it was *you* who locked the doors, hid the keys and compelled him to leave his house to-night by a front window.

ANDY (*frightened*). Did yo' see me lock de door an' hide de keys?

DIMPLE (*firmly*). I did.

ANDY (*gasping*). An'—an'—yo' 'tend to tell on me?

DIMPLE. Certainly.

ANDY. An' hab me fired?

DIMPLE. That's what you deserve.

ANDY. I wus only tryin' to help Miss Maud keep de ole man in.

DIMPLE. Then why hadn't you sense enough to nail down the windows?

ANDY. I never thought ob dat. (*Pleadingly*) Say, Dimple, yo' won't peach on me, will yo'? I'll gib yo' one, two—free months pay if you don't. (*DIMPLE starts slowly R. ANDY follows.*) I'll promise to do anything yo' axes.

DIMPLE (*at R. C.*). Will you promise never to meddle in my affairs again?

ANDY (*quickly*). Yes.

DIMPLE. Never follow me on the street?

ANDY. Nebber, as long as I lib.

DIMPLE. Nor put any one else up to do it?

ANDY (*crossing breast*). 'Deed an' double 'deed, I won't.

DIMPLE. Then kneel down and swear that you'll keep your promises.

ANDY (*expostulatingly*). Right here on de street?

DIMPLE. Yes, sir. Right here, this minute. Your simple promise isn't worth that! (*Snaps fingers.*)

ANDY (*quickly glancing L.*). But dar am 'at sneakin', tell-tale Billy Smith peepin' 'round de corner.

DIMPLE. I don't care if there are fifty Billy Smiths looking this way. You have got to do what I tell you, or take the consequences.

ANDY (*turning quickly R., shaking right fist and yelling ex-*

## The Steel King.

*citedly*). Scat! Draw in yo'r turtle snoot an' scoot fur yo'r life 'fore I catches yo'. (*Makes feint to start R. and beats a tattoo with feet.*) He's off. De coast am clear. (*Falls to knees and elevates right arm.*) I swear it.

DIMPLE (*quickly*). Now, I'm safe. See to it that you remember that oath, but don't forget (*significantly*) that I made you no promises.

(*Quickly exits R. laughing.*)

ANDY (*rising disgusted*). Blamed if I ever had a meaner or a—(*brushing knees*) dirtier trick played on me. De debbil knowed what he wus 'bout in de Garden ob Eden when he got Eve to tackle Adam 'stead 'ob 'sportin' wid her hisself. He got her to bring grist to his mill, an' her daughters hab been helpin' him 'long in his bis' nis eber since, Dar's many a cloven foot peepin' out under a silk petticoat, an' no man is sartain sure ob heaben dat follows de rustlin' ob wimmin's skirts. I'se wiser now dan a half hour ago, but I'll get even wid dat gal Dimple. She's in lub wid Lawyer Green, an' is conceited 'nough to b'lieve she can side-track Miss Maud. I'se put a bug in her ear dat will make her take de shortest way home dat she knows ob. Dat gibs me an idea! I must hurry home, too, and work it for all it's worth. (*Disgustedly.*) I wonder if that imp ob a Smith seed me do de kneelin' act? If he did an' blows to de boys I'll fertilize a ten-acre lot wid his carcass. (*Starts L.*)

(*Enter HENRY L. I. E.*)

HENRY. Eh, Andy, you are the person I've been looking for. Can you tell where I'll be likely to find Mr. Reber?

ANDY. I seed him go in de law office ob Brown & Co., 'bout a half hour ago.

HENRY. Then I'll probably find him there. Have you seen Anthony to-night?

ANDY. Yes, sah, he's locked arms wid de debbil again, an' actin' as his spokesman. His tank am half full of bad whiskey an' his top mast will soon need splicin' to keep his colors flyin'.

HENRY. That's bad. I must see him at once.

ANDY (*quickly, pointing off R.*). Dar he goes now.

HENRY. That's true. (*Calls.*) Ho, Anthony! Can I see you a moment? (*To ANDY.*) Leave me please. I want to talk with him alone.

ANDY. All right, I'm off. Only be keerful an' don't cross him. He's in a stavin' humor.

(*Exits L. I E.*)

*Enter BILL R. I E., unsteady.*

BILL (*gruffly*). Well, what do you want?

HENRY. I'm sorry to see—

BILL (*interrupting*). No preaching. It's bread I want, not lectures.

HENRY. It's evident that you are not in need of liquids. How



about your promise to Nellie and me, "one glass of whiskey at a time?"

BILL. I've kept it.

HENRY. Then how do you account for your present condition.

BILL. Ten glasses, one at a time, solves the problem.

HENRY. Ah, I see. You've kept the letter of the law, but broken its spirit. Is it true that you and the boys have planned to destroy Mr. Reber's property to-night?

BILL (*angrily*). That's none of your business.

HENRY (*coolly*). That may be your view, but I see things in a different light. As a law-abiding citizen it is my *duty* to prevent crime if possible, and I ask you for the sake of Nellie, who loves you dearly, to go home, stay there and avoid trouble.

BILL. I shan't do that.

HENRY. Then I shall warn the authorities of your purpose and aid them to defeat it.

BILL (*savagely*). No, you won't, for, damn me, I'll throttle you first. There shall be no traitor to labor in our ranks. (*Rushes upon HENRY and attempts to seize him by throat. HENRY grasps BILL by wrists and after a short struggle forces him to knees.*)

HENRY. What do you mean by trying to murder one who has so often befriended you? Are you so rum crazed as to be unable to distinguish between friend and foe? What would Nellie think were she to hear of this attack upon me? It would almost break her loving heart. (*Releases BILL and helps him to rise.*) Again I beg of you, by the love you bear your child, to go home. If you longer remain upon the street in your inflamed condition there is no telling what may happen to you.

BILL. I can't go home. The sight of my child maddens me. She is slowly dying of starvation, and from a lack of medicines which Reber's cursed stubbornness prevents my providing. As sure as my child dies, so help me, God, I'll kill that wretch.

HENRY (*horrified*). Hush! Hush! you must not utter such terrible threats. Do what I asked you to do, and I'll pledge you my word that Nellie's every want shall be attended to.

BILL. How? I'll stand no charity appeals in her behalf. Will you make Reber open his mills and give me work?

HENRY. That I cannot do.

BILL. Then he's got to take the medicine prepared for him, and I'll help shove it down his throat. (*Exits quickly R. I. E.*)

HENRY (*quickly starting R.*). Hold up, Anthony, I've another offer to make you.

BILL (*off R. I. E.*). Too late! The die is cast.

(*Exit HENRY R. I. E.*)

*Flats are drawn off disclosing*

## The Steel King.

SCENE III.—REBER'S colonial residence in 4. G Door C, windows R. and L. Practical portico elevated three feet, length of house, with practical steps C. leading up to it. Large armchair upon porch R. with palm-leaf fan upon it. If practical, use bunch or cluster lights R. and L. rear for lighting effect. Have doorway backed to represent vestibule, with drop light from flies. DIMPLE discovered upon portico, ear to keyhole of door facing R. ANDY crouching L. of C. near porch watching door and manifesting delight.

ANDY (after a slight pause). Boo!

DIMPLE (startled). Oh! (Turns, L. clasping hands over heart.) My, but that startled me, my heart is beating like a trip hammer.

ANDY (rising, gleefully). Now, I'se got yo' whar I wanted yo', Miss Spy. Yo' blow on me to de ole man if yo' dare.

DIMPLE (at edge of portico). What did you mean by causing me such a fright?

ANDY. I wanted to let you know dat I had ketched yo' in a mean, sneakin', spy act. Yo' can't git me fired now, 'less yo' git yo'r walkin' papers, too. Did yo' hear de music of Brass Buttons clinkin' 'against a silk waist at dat key hole?

DIMPLE (irritated). No, I didn't. I was merely looking through the keyhole to find out what prevented my latch key from opening the door.

ANDY (whistles). Golly, but dat am a whopper! Do yo' see wid yo'r ears? Maybe yo'll deny listenin' at de keyhole ob de sittin'-room door, too, an' havin' to run like sin to 'scape bein' ketched by Brass Buttons an' Miss Maud comin' out in de hall. (Gleefully, as DIMPLE descends steps.) Oh, I'se got you down fine. I knowed I'd put a bug in your ear an' dat yo'd hurry home as fast as yo' could, so I scooted home, too, so as to watch yo'.

DIMPLE. You are a mean, contemptible, lying little nigger. That's what you are. Didn't you swear never to watch me again?

ANDY. 'Course I did, but oath wus not bindin' in de eye ob de law, 'cause it was wrung from me by propulsion.

DIMPLE. I wish—(Loud cry of angry voices heard from rear, startling DIMPLE and ANDY.) What does that mean?

ANDY. Spect de riot am started. I'll see.

(Quickly exits L. 3 E. followed by DIMPLE.)

Enter GREEN and MAUD from house, stand upon porch.

MAUD (anxiously). I am greatly alarmed, Mr. Green. I do wish Mr. Reber had remained at home. His going down town a night like this and exposing himself to the fury of the inflamed passions of his men seems to me like flying in the face of Providence and inviting destruction.

GREEN (hat in hand). I'll frankly admit that your fears are not without a reasonable foundation and they are shared by others. Yet I hope that no harm may befall Mr. Reber. Our authorities

evidently fear trouble to-night and realize their inability to cope with it, for I received a telegram from our Governor a half hour ago ordering me as captain of the Light Horse Guard to hold my men in readiness to assist the civil authorities in preserving law and order. My men are now assembled under arms in the armory and are ready at a moment's notice to quiet any breach of the peace that may occur. My instructions are to uphold the majesty of the law, and to protect the lives and property of any who are in danger from unruly elements at all hazards. (*An indistinct commotion heard off R.*)

MAUD (*greatly alarmed*). Hark! What does that mean? (*A scurrying of feet is heard off R. and voices are heard in the distance, "Give us bread or death!" "Down with baron robbers!" "Steel Kings!" "Oppressors of the poor, who deny bread to starving men, women and children!"*) Trouble is fomenting and the fires of anarchy are being lighted! A reign of terror will soon be upon us. (*Extends arms aloft.*) God have mercy upon us and avert bloodshed and the horrors of mob law.

GREEN (*placing hat upon head and descending steps*). I must be off to my post of duty. Good night, Miss Sefton. Be of good cheer. Hope for the best and I trust all will end well.

MAUD. Good night. Do your duty in the fear of God. While you watch, I shall pray. (*Exit GREEN L. 3 E., hurriedly; MAUD into house.*)

(*Terrific commotion off R. which momentarily becomes louder and nearer. Frantic cries are heard, "Don't let him escape!" "Kill the scoundrel!" "Hang the wretch!" "Away with him to the nearest lamp post!" "He fights with the fury of a mad-man!" "Hold him, hold him. He's off again!" A fearful cry of rage is uttered, "Catch him!" "Seize him!" accompanied with the sound of running footsteps.*)

*Enter REBER running R. 1. E. Hat off, coat in tatters, collar bursted in front, seems nearly exhausted and is badly frightened. Glances over left shoulder as he enters, trips and falls.*

REBER (*hastily rising*). The hounds are after me. Oh, for strength enough to reach my home! (*Starts quickly for house, is intercepted by ANTHONY and four men who rush in from R. U. E.*)

BILL (*savagely seizing REBER*). No, you don't; we've got you now. Help me secure him, men. (*Men surround REBER who fights furiously. Men rush in R. 1, 2 and 3 E. armed with clubs, hammers, pitchforks and ropes. Suit number of mob to stage capacity.*)

REBER (*screaming*). Help! Help! Help! I'll be murdered!

*Re-enter HENRY running R. 1 E. He furiously brushes men aside and forces his way C. At same instant re-enter ANDY L. 2 E.*

## The Steel King.

BILL (*trying to force REBER to kneels*). Down on your knees and pray. Your time in this world is short.

HENRY (*furiously attacking men nearest REBER*). Release that man, you cowardly scoundrels! You shall not injure him in my presence.

ANDY (*striking R. and L.*). Plug de low cusses right an' left. I'se wid yo'.

BILL. Treason in the camp. Down with monopoly sympathizers! (*Men upon outer circle crowd toward C. REBER, HENRY and ANDY fight desperately, but are gradually being overpowered. Re-enter MAUD from house with revolver in hand. Takes in situation at a glance. Raises revolver and fires over head of men who rush pell mell down a few steps leaving REBER at C., HENRY to his R. and ANDY to his L.*)

BILL (*startled. Faces REBER, back to porch*). My God, what is the meaning of that! (*Hastily glances over left shoulder. HENRY quickly strikes him and knocks him down.*)

HENRY (*quickly seizing REBER, speaks rapidly*). Now is our chance, Andy. Into the house with him in a jiffy. Be quick. (*ANDY seizes REBER, who totters from weakness and with HENRY'S help starts running up with him. BILL rises quickly.*)

BILL (*savagely to mob as he starts up*). Seize him! (*Mob starts up. MAUD fires over men's heads. They fall back. BILL halts.*)

MAUD. Don't compel bloodshed, men. Go home and give up your wicked designs. (*REBER, HENRY, and ANDY start up steps of porch.*)

BILL (*preparing to rush up*). One grand rush, boys, and the man and house will be ours. Ready!

*Re-enter GREEN L. 3 E. leading a body of soldiers, single file, on a double quick. Have enough soldiers to line up across L. 3 E. to R. 3 E.*

GREEN (*at R. 3 E.*). Halt! Left face! (*Men obey orders. MAUD removes fan from chair, REBER is seated in it. MAUD stands R. and fans REBER while watching every movement of men below. ANDY stands L. of REBER. As soon as REBER is seated, HENRY quickly descends steps, passes back and around L. end of soldiers and takes position at L. 2 E.*)

BILL (*enraged*). Charge upon the blue-coated minions of wealth, boys, and trample them under foot. Be quick! (*Mob with yells of rage start up, but halt when guns are trained upon them.*)

GREEN (*quickly, elevating sword. Men obey commands*). Ready! Aim!—

HENRY (*running, C. and facing soldiers, and slightly in advance of mob. Speaks in thrilling tones*). My God, captain, don't slaughter these poor, misguided, passion-crazed men. If you must shoot—(*elevates arms*) direct your men to send their volley into me,

MAUD (*shrieking as she falls to knees and clasps hands*). Spare him! Spare him! This is awful!

REBER (*quickly rising, speaks with intense excitement, but with labored effort*). Don't shoot—Captain.—Order—your men to—present bayonets—and hold the mob at bay.

QUICK DROP.

### ACT III.

SCENE—*Same as SCENE 3. ACT 1. Curtain rises to music.*

REBER *seated at table L. C., right elbow upon table, chin resting in palm of hand, lost in thought. Lights up. Enter MAUD silently D. C. Sees REBER. Goes down and lays hand upon his left shoulder. REBER starts.*

MAUD (*anxiously*). Are you feeling badly, sir?

REBER. Yes, I'm so disgusted and heartsick at my men's unjustifiable attack upon me last night that I feel tempted to dismantle my mills.

MAUD. That would prove a terrible calamity to this town. Better sell your plant and retire from business.

REBER. Gladly would I do that this day had I a purchaser for it.

MAUD. I'll buy it.

REBER (*surprised*). You'll buy it! What would you do with it?

MAUD. Run it upon a co-operative plan. My men receiving the market value for their labor and a pro rata share of all profits above ten per cent upon capital invested in the plant. Six per cent of that would represent my dividend; two per cent repairs; while the remaining two per cent would go into a sinking fund with the understanding that when it equalled the capital I originally invested it would be handed me and my plant become the property of my men. Don't you think such a plan would prove an incentive for men to give the best returns for labor possible?

REBER. I certainly do. It would be to their interest to work hard, use material to the best advantage, and exercise care in the use of machinery and tools.

MAUD. Just so, sir. (*Enthusiastically.*) Every well-directed thought and blow struck would mean that much toward their elevation to proprietorship. It would create pride in the character of work turned out; contentment that capital was not trying to take advantage of labor's necessities; cement the men in a bond of brotherhood having in view the common weal of all, and help pave the way for the ultimate triumph of Christianity. Does not my plan commend itself to your thoughtful consideration?

REBER. No, it is impracticable; too much of a one-sided arrangement.

MAUD. I'm sorry to hear you say that. I know the revenue I.



would derive from my investment would not enable me to accumulate money rapidly, yet it would enable me to lend a helping hand to those who were obliged to toil for their daily bread, which would give me far greater pleasure. I consider the fortune left me by my father in the light of a sacred trust, for which I shall some day be called upon to give an account. It came not into my hands by chance, but was committed to my care by a loving Creator for a wise purpose. I feel keenly the responsibility resting upon me and have no desire to increase it by adding to my wealth. In thinking how I could best employ my capital, so as to improve the condition of mankind, bring happiness to myself and present an example for holders of wealth to pattern after, I conceived the plan I have just mentioned. I believe it to be a feasible one. It surely will attest my love for my fellowmen and enable me the more successfully to carry out my life's mission.

REBER. What is that?

MAUD. To make the world better and brighter for my having lived in it. Will you sell me your mills? (*Pleadingly.*) Please do, for I wish to end the terrible suffering of the men, women, and the innocent children of our town which I am daily called upon to witness.

REBER (*with warmth*). No, I will not. My advice to you is to give up your fanatical religious ideas, let your capital remain where I have salted it down for you in good first mortgage securities, and leave the manufacturing business to be looked after by those qualified for the business.

MAUD. I——

*Enter HENRY D. C. ushered in by ANDY.*

ANDY. Mr. Henry to see Mr. Reber on 'ticular bis'nis. (*Exits D. C. REBER rises.*)

HENRY. Good morning, Miss Sefton, Mr. Reber. (*MAUD bows.*)

REBER (*pleasantly*). Good morning, Henry.

MAUD (*to REBER*). Excuse me, please. (*Crosses R. and exits R. 2 E.*)

REBER (*going up*). I'm glad to see you. (*Grasps HENRY'S hand, who appears slightly displeased.*) I was just on the point of sending for you. I wanted to thank you again for saving my life. You acted nobly last night, as but few men would dare do. In risking your life to save mine, to prevent bloodshed and the ushering in of a reign of anarchy you have won the gratitude of myself, your fellow townsmen, and that of our State.

HENRY. I did but my duty, sir, as I would others do to me, so please let us dismiss the subject. Do you recall a promise made me to fulfil any request which lay in your power to grant?

REBER. I do. It was made after your refusal to accept a check for stopping my runaway team and probably saving my life.



## The Steel King.

HENRY (*significantly*). You have a good memory for some things.

REBER (*abruptly*). What did I ever do to gain your enmity?

HENRY. Excuse me, sir, but I'd rather not answer your question.

REBER. Then state the object of your visit.

HENRY. There is a rumor current upon the street that you intend to prosecute Anthony for leading the attack upon you last night. May I ask if it be true?

REBER (*with emphasis*). It is.

HENRY (*earnestly*). Then, sir, I beg of you not to do it. By granting my request you will fulfil the promise made me and relieve yourself of every obligation that you feel you owe me.

REBER (*astonished*). Why, man, what do you mean? Do you think I'll permit a man to attempt to kill me and then let him go scot free? Do you forget that man would have killed you had it not been for the interference of the troops last night?

HENRY. No, sir. I do not forget it, neither do I forget that Bill was under the influence of vile whiskey, was smarting from the blow I struck him and the defeat of his purpose when he attacked me. I had a long talk with him last night after the excitement subsided, and after convincing him that the blow I struck him saved him from the gallows, he freely forgave me for it and acknowledged me as his friend.

REBER (*searchingly*). Was it you who hustled him so quickly to a place of safety and prevented the officers from arresting him? (*A slight pause. HENRY slightly bows head, eyes upon floor.*) Yes, I'm sure of it. You are a strange man! First you risk your life in my behalf; then offer it as a sacrifice for a mob's sins; then when attacked with murderous design, you seize your would-be murderer and hurry him off to a place of safety to prevent his arrest, and finally win his friendship. Such actions are beyond my comprehension. To what are they due?

HENRY. To a simple desire to preserve the laws of my country, aid my fellowmen, and to (*pointing upward*) serve my Master.

REBER. A trinity of motives, eh? Not a bad code of principles to live by. I'd like to grant your request, for I owe you much, yet I don't like the idea of that scoundrel escaping the punishment he justly deserves.

HENRY. He's not a bad man at heart. Whiskey has got the upper hand of him just now. Prior to the closing down of your mills, there wasn't a kinder husband or father to be found anywhere. Since that time, he's gone down the road to perdition at a rapid pace. He's exhausted his credit around town, and his poor wife and children are on the verge of starvation: It was the sight of their misery last night that drove Bill to frenzy.

REBER. Do you know where to find him?

HENRY. I do.

REBER. How long will it take you to bring him here?

HENRY. About five minutes.

REBER. Then do so. I'd like to ask him a question or two. Upon his answers will depend whether I grant your request.

HENRY. Will you pledge me your word that no treachery is intended?

REBER (*surprised*). Why, what do you mean?

HENRY. That he will not be arrested if he appears here, and that no spies will be employed to shadow him when he leaves.

REBER (*warmly*). What do you mean by such insinuations? Do you consider me a petty trickster and unworthy of confidence? You have grossly insulted me and deserve to be kicked out of my house.

HENRY. I'm sorry that I've offended you. Such was not my intention. I was only thinking of Anthony's safety. I desire his reformation and believe it can be effected if mercy be shown him in his present situation. I spoke hastily—out of a heart full of bitter memories.

REBER (*inquiringly*). Towards me?

HENRY (*hesitatingly*). Yes, sir.

REBER. Why, what wrong have I done you?

HENRY. Please don't press the matter, Mr. Reber. I feel that the near future will reveal it in all its fulness, and that events are shaping themselves to that end. I'm ready to produce Anthony. Shall I do so and let him speak for himself?

REBER. Yes. To allay all fears I'll promise that should he fall into the hands of the authorities as an outcome of the interview, I'll use my influence to have him released, even to the extent of refusing to appear against him.

HENRY. Thank you. Good morning. (*Bows and starts up C.*)

REBER. I'll see you out. (*Exeunt HENRY and REBER door C.*)

*Enter ANDY L. 2 E., excitedly, with small camera in hand.*

ANDY. By golly, where shall I hide? Dey am comin' dis way. (*Runs up and gets behind screen L. C.*)

*Enter GREEN and DIMPLE L. 2 E. Go down C.*

GREEN. Are you sure, Dimple, that you love me better than anyone else in the world?

DIMPLE (*beaming*). Yes, I'm sure of it.

GREEN. Do you think Mr. Reber or Miss Maud have any idea of our attachment?

DIMPLE (*emphatically*). No, indeed.

GREEN. How about that little nigger?

DIMPLE. There's no telling what he thinks or knows. He can out-swear, cheat and lie old Nick himself. (*ANDY peeps out R. of screen immensely tickled.*)

GREEN. I'm heartily ashamed of the way I've deceived Mr.

Reber and Miss Maud. I've abused their hospitality and friendship for the sake of a little fun with you.

DIMPLE (*alarmed*). A little fun with me?

GREEN (*coolly*). That's what I said. To-day ends my visits here.

DIMPLE (*half crying*). Don't—you—intend—coming to see me—any more?

GREEN. No. I cannot.

DIMPLE. Are you going—to—cast me off—after all that's—passed—between us?

GREEN. I certainly must—(*A slight pause. GREEN looks at DIMPLE, who appears ready to burst into tears.*)—unless——

DIMPLE. Unless what?

GREEN. Unless you promise to marry me next week!

DIMPLE. Are you in earnest? Oh, tell me quickly.

GREEN (*smiling*). I certainly am. (*Extends arms.*)

DIMPLE (*joyously*). Then I'll do it. (*Springs into GREEN's arms. ANDY exposes enough of his body to take snap shot of the scene, while manifesting intense delight, then retreats behind screen.*)

GREEN. Did you think I no longer loved you, sweetheart?

DIMPLE. Yes. Don't play any more tricks like that on me.

GREEN. I won't. At least not until after our marriage. (*Releases DIMPLE.*) You had better direct me to Miss Maud now. I must keep up appearances, you know.

DIMPLE. All right. This way, please. (*Exeunt R., 2 E.*)

(*ANDY appears from behind screen with camera. Places it in coat pocket as he goes down C. talking.*)

ANDY. Dat makes one hundred an' twenty-five hug-me-tight, jowl-to-jowl, lap-warmin' an' kissin' scenes dat I'se taken ob dis courtin' match. Brass Buttons am got to pay me fur Dimple, dats a sure pop. I'se not in de bis'nis fur a lub ob art, nor fur 'musement; but 'tensely prac'able purposes. Ebbery picture represents a *pull*—(*Extends arms and draws them in as though embracing some one.*) an' a *suction*—(*Puckers lips.*) dat'll draw silver dollars from de lawyer like as he wus a mintin' machine. Dat'll make Dimple ravin' mad, an I'se mighty a-feared she'll tell de ole man 'bout de key racket an' git me fired. If Miss Maud hadn't gib me five dollars to help her keep de ole man in, I'd nebbber tho't ob dat dodge. Now, if dar's a hearin' dat bribe will come out an' my bacon be cooked to a crisp. I'll hab to bluff Dimple good an' hard to keep her quiet. Dat's my only hope, fur dars no chance of 'peasin' de ole man's raff by pleadin' devotion to his int'rests wid dat bribe stickin' out.

*Re-enter DIMPLE R., 2 E. in a joyous mood. Goes down C.*

ANDY. Here she comes! May de good Lord 'spire me wid de cunnin' ob de debble!

DIMPLE (*pleasantly*). Andy, what did Mr. Reber say to you about your fighting for him last night?

ANDY. Oh, he praised me sky high! Most went down on his knees showin' de gratitude dat he owed me. 'Twas not so much what he said as what he *did* dat touched my heart.

DIMPLE (*eagerly*). What was that?

ANDY. Gave me a twenty-dollar bill to plaster over me bruises.

DIMPLE. That was kind!

ANDY (*aside*). Now, for de bluff. (*To DIMPLE*). It was too kind, 'cause it broke me all up, made me feel dat bad lockin' him in last night, so I up an' told him de whole racket.

DIMPLE (*astonished*). You did?

ANDY. Yes, made a clean breast ob it.

DIMPLE (*eagerly*). What did he say?

ANDY. At first he was awful mad, stormied 'round an' 'bused me shameful. Den he cooled down, laughed an' said it was a good joke, but he warned me nebber to take sich liberties wid him again or he'd crack my head.

DIMPLE. You were lucky getting off so easy.

ANDY. Mebbe I wus, but yo' don't s'pose de ole man would treasure anything agin me now, arter de way I fit fur him last night, do yo'?

DIMPLE. He would not be likely to, unless he knew as much about your badness as I do.

ANDY. He wouldn't do it, eben den. I knows how he fee's towards me. If yo' wants to test it yo' am welcome to tell him all yo' knows 'bout me. (*Boldly.*) I *dares* yo' to do it.

DIMPLE. You can afford to be brave now that you are in Mr. Reber's good graces, but how about last night when you were down on your knees? (*ANDY winces.*) You don't like to hear about that, eh?

ANDY (*angrily*). No, I don't, an' yo' tryin' to rub it in will make yo' twenty-five dollars poorer dan yo' would have been.

DIMPLE. How? (*Doorbell rings off L.*) Oh, pshaw! There goes the doorbell! (*Exits hurriedly L. 2 E.*)

ANDY (*chuckling*). Dar's no danger ob her tattlin' now. She t'inks me solid wid de ole man——

*Re-enter REBER D. C.*

REBER (*Up C.*). Andy, I want you to hand me inside of an hour the name of the servant who sought to become my jailer last night. Such a high-handed piece of impudence merits dismissal, and I intend he shall get his deserts. (*ANDY faces audience, scared.*)

ANDY. But s'posin' he did it out ob lub fur yo'—to keep yo' from harm, what den?

REBER. No supposition will be entertained. I want *facts* and shall expect you to furnish them. (*ANDY slightly turns head L., eyes upon the floor, scared expression.* REBER looks at him a moment, nods head knowingly, smiles, crosses and exits R. 2 E.)

ANDY. Dis am de debble's own work, an' how I'se to pull out

'less he gib me a big lift, I don't know. S'posin' de bell hadn't rung an' Dimple had heard de ole man! Oh, Lordy! It's sartin dat I'll hab to own up, but darn my Sunday-go-to-meetin' breeches if dat gal hears me, eben if I has to kidnap de ole man so as to 'fess to him alone.

*Re-enter REBER R. 2 E. followed by MAUD and GREEN.*

REBER. I do not fear any violence from Anthony, and only desire your presence as witnesses to the interview. (*Crosses to table L. C. and takes seat. ANDY goes up L. C., GREEN down R. C., MAUD to his L.*)

DIMPLE (*in doorway C.*). Mr. Henry and Anthony to see Mr. Reber.

REBER (*rising L. of table*). Show them in. (*DIMPLE exits L.*)

*Re-enter HENRY door C. followed by BILL. HENRY goes down L. C. near MR. REBER. ANTHONY up L. C.*

HENRY. Anthony is here, Mr. Reber, and ready to answer any questions you may desire to ask him.

REBER. Is it true, Anthony, that you were the ringleader of the mob that attacked me last night?

BILL. It is.

REBER. Is it a fact that you intended to kill me?

BILL. It is.

REBER. You are candid.

BILL. Don't you desire the truth?

REBER. I do.

BILL. That's what I'm giving you.

REBER. Did I ever do you a wrong which would justify your taking my life for it?

BILL. No, I can't say that you did.

REBER. Then why did you attempt it last night?

BILL. I was driven to it by frenzy.

REBER. Produced by what?

BILL (*brokenly, drawing coat sleeve across eyes*). By the sight—of my—starving children. (*Goes quickly up C., is met at door C., by DIMPLE and NELLIE. BILL picks up NELLIE and goes down L. C. to former position. NELLIE is thin and wan, arms and features made up to represent an emaciated condition. DIMPLE enters and takes position up R. G.*)

BILL (*extending NELLIE*). Here is one of them.

REBER. (*horrified*). My God, man, you don't mean that child's condition is due to want of food, do you?

BILL. Principally that. (*Draws NELLIE to bosom, who throws arms around BILL'S neck and rests head upon his shoulder. BILL draws coat sleeve of disengaged arm across eyes. All visibly affected.*) I have four more at home, little better than this one. The sight of their misery, the thought that you were responsible for their condition in denying me work, and a glass of bad whiskey,



caused the devil to take possession of me. If ever hell existed upon earth, my breast held its throne last night. Yes, I intended to kill you—(NELLIE *tries to cover* BILL'S *mouth with hand*.) It's the truth, dearie, and that's what the gentleman wants to hear. I did intend to kill him and would have done it, had it not been for that man (*indicating* HENRY), who saved his life and my own. I know I did wrong and I'm sorry for it; but what's done can't be undone. If I alone could be made to suffer for my folly it would be easier to bear (*brokenly*),—but to think of you, mother, and the other little ones having to share it with me is what hurts me most.

REBER. Anthony, if I agree not to prosecute you for your attack upon me last night, promise to relieve all immediate needs of your family, and to give you a position to-morrow which will enable you to live in comfort and lay aside money for a rainy day, will you reveal to me the names of your lieutenants who aided you in fomenting last night's trouble?

BILL (*emphatically*). No, sir.

ANDY (*quickly, aside*). Bully for him!

REBER. What! Do you mean that?

BILL. I do.

REBER. Will one thousand dollars added to my other inducements cause you to change your mind?

BILL. No, sir, nor one hundred thousand dollars on top of it. You can starve me, torture me with prison fetters; but I'll never prove a traitor to my fellow-workmen, so help me, God!

ANDY (*aside*). Dat has de ring ob true metal!

(MOTHER GRUNDY, *wild-eyed, excited, is seen at door C. peeping in, but is unobserved by actors.*)

REBER. Then the law shall take its course. I—

HENRY. One moment, Mr. Reber, please. I'd like to say a word in behalf of—

REBER. 'Twill be useless. My mind is made up. No mercy has been shown me; neither will I show mercy.

*Enter* MOTHER GRUNDY *quickly door C. stands up C. much excited.*

MOTHER G. Then you die! (*All are startled.* MOTHER G. *quickly throws fold of shawl over right of shoulder, raises right arm aloft as in act of throwing, revealing a black ball in hand the size of an egg.*)

REBER (*shrieking with fright*). A dynamite bomb! My God, we'll be blown to atoms!

MOTHER G. A bold robber in life, a cringing coward in death! Ha—Ha! Die!

HENRY (*quickly, with force*). Mother, you can't throw that bomb. Your arm is paralyzed! MOTHER G. *slightly starts, arm becomes rigid, eyes appear staring, mouth open.* REBER *down* L.C. *face turned* L. *body slightly inclined* L., *right arm extended*

## The Steel King.

*toward MOTHER G. warding off blow. GREEN down R. C. face turned R., left arm employed in warding off blow. MAUD slightly back of GREEN, hands clasped, eyes looking upward, lips moving as in prayer. DIMPLE falls to knees, clasps MAUD'S skirts, screaming. HENRY slightly back of REBER, brows contracted, eyes riveted upon MOTHER GRUNDY. BILL back of HENRY, turns L. and tries to cover NELLIE with coat. ANDY up L. C. yelling "Murder!" Features of all express terror. MOTHER G. up C.*

QUICK DROP.



## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Corridor in REBER's house in 1 G. Curtain rises to music. Enter GREEN and DIMPLE L. 1 E. GREEN has hat in hand.*

DIMPLE. My! but didn't Mr. Henry waltz his mother out of the room in a jiffy?

GREEN (*at C.*). Yes, and made the mistake of his life in doing it. Had he stood his ground and sought to shield his mother's bomb-throwing behind a plea of insanity, instead of running away with her, I believe all would have ended well.

DIMPLE. Do you think Mr. Reber will have her arrested?

GREEN. That was his intention in following her out of the house. Whether it can be accomplished without the death of Henry, Mr. Reber, or both, is another matter.

DIMPLE (*alarmed*). Do you fear bloodshed?

GREEN. I do indeed, and so does Miss Maud.

DIMPLE. Then that accounts for her excitement.

GREEN. Henry fairly idolizes his afflicted mother, and I believe will resist her arrest even to yielding up his life in her defense.

DIMPLE. I don't want any funerals around here, yet I do hope Mr. Henry defeats Mr. Reber's purpose.

GREEN. So do I, dear. Where is Miss Maud?

DIMPLE. In her room putting on her hat.

GREEN (*smiling*). As I am about starting on a perilous journey don't you think your benediction ought to accompany me? (*Extends arms*).

DIMPLE (*coyly*). Will it be safe to bestow it?

GREEN. Nothing venture, nothing win.

DIMPLE (*hesitating*). I would like to—I believe I will—(*Starts for GREEN, stops quickly.*) Hark! (*Glances off L. then runs to GREEN, presses fingers upon lips, and touches GREEN's cheek with them.*) There! Avoids GREEN's attempted embrace.) No, you don't, Miss Maud is coming. I'm off to look for Andy. (*Exits quickly R. 1, E.*)

GREEN (*crossing R.*) Confound it, just my luck!  
*Enter MAUD L. 1. E. excited. Stands L. C. nervously putting on and fastening gloves.*

MAUD. Has not Andy returned?

GREEN. No, but I'm expecting him every moment.

MAUD. Have you mapped out a plan of action?

GREEN. Partly. Our actions will largely be governed by circumstances.

MAUD. Mrs. Henry's imprisonment must be prevented at all hazards, or the poor woman will become a raving maniac for life. Remember that her safety is paramount to all other considerations, and to that end you are to use my fortune—aye, *force*, too, if necessary.

GREEN. Your wishes shall be carried out to the best of my ability. I have a couple of strong cards up my sleeve to play against Mr. Reber's hand, and I think they will win the game for us.

MAUD. Why don't Andy come? We are losing valuable time, and I fear we may be too late to accomplish our object.

ANDY. (*loudly off R.*). Clar out, I tell yo'.

MAUD. That's him, now.

ANDY (*off R.*). Clar out. I'se no time to answer poor white trash's questions.

*Enter ANDY R. 1 E., quickly, hat in hand, followed by DIMPLE.*

ANDY (*with animation*). De kerridge am at de door, Miss Maud, an' hitched to it am two ob de quickest steppin' hosses in town. Dey will carry yo' 'long de road like a streak ob greased lightnin'.

MAUD. What about Mr. Reber and Henry? Where are they?

ANDY. Mr. Henry an' his mudder am' a-trackin' it fur home a-hind Bill Sykes' 2 : 40 nag, an' Mr. Reber an' two p'licemen am a-followin' 'em in a coupe. You see—(*talks quickly*) jest as soon as Mr. Henry reached de street, he grabbed his mudder by de arm an' skooted down de street so fast dat de old lady stood on de p'int ob her toes an' slid. Mr. Reber he shot up de street on a dead run. As luck would hab it, 'long cum Bill Sykes—a 'tic'lar friend ob Mr. Henry—drivin' down de street wid his 2 : 40 pacer. Mr. Henry hailed him, picked up his mudder like as if she was a fedder, tosses her in Bill's buggy, clum in hisself an' said sumfin' to Bill who hollered to his mare. (*Enthusiastically.*) Den yo' ought to hab seen dat hoss! She lowered her belly within six inches of the cobblestones, an' her legs flew all ober de street, leabin' a streak ob fire a-hind her. As she turned de corner at Main street I seed Mr. Reber cum polin' down de street in a coupe, settin' 'twixt two p'licemen. De cabby had his nag a-runnin', an' he was lam'bastin' him fur keeps, but he'll nebber ketch de flyin' Dutchman, dis side—

GREEN. What became of Anthony?

ANDY. He's takin' his kid home. Den he 'tends to cross de fields to Mr. Henry's house an' help him hold his fort. Bill said dis is his funeral, an' he'd be—(*Catches himself.*)—dat no woman corpses should take his place.

GREEN. Good! We may need his services. (*To MAUD*). We know how the land lies. Are you ready?

MAUD (*crossing R.*) Yes. Offer our driver twenty-five dollars to get the best speed out of his horses possible. (*Exeunt MAUD and GREEN R. I. E.*)

DIMPLE (*snappishly*). What do you think of labor unions now? A pretty mess they have gotten us into.

ANDY (*warmly*). Dey am all right. It's de fools dat run dem dat cause de trouble. Widout dem de world would be a blamed sight worse off. De masses ob de people—de laborin' classes—am bein' sat on. Dey am not gettin' fair play, by a jugful.

DIMPLE. They will never improve their condition through labor unions.

ANDY. Why not?

DIMPLE. Because they are composed of men with but one idea—that of fighting capital. The principle is wrong. Labor and capital cannot afford to be at loggerheads. One is dependent upon the other. There will always be two classes in this world, Andy, the rich and the poor, in spite of all you can do.

ANDY. Yes, an' one is a-gittin' richer all de time, an' oders poorer. Dat's not right.

DIMPLE. How can it be prevented? If you take the wealth away from the class who holds it to-day it will be in the hands of another tomorrow. Until you get every man, woman and child in this world to love their neighbor as themselves, there will be want, misery and injustice on every side.

ANDY. Men treat their hosses, cattle, dogs an' cats wid 'sideration, why don't dey treat each oder de same way?

DIMPLE. Old Nick can answer that better than I can. If you are bound to become a reformer and really want to aid the laboring man, I'll tell you how you can best do it. Listen! Get him to stop drinking whiskey, supporting saloons and grog shopkeepers, and give his daily wages to his wife, mother or sister to spend for him. That will free him quicker from the evils he complains of than all the labor unions in Christendom.

ANDY (*disgusted*). Yes, an' land him in petticoat slabbery! Dar's mighty little difference 'twixt servin' de debble an' wimmin folks. Both make bad masters an' are not to be trusted.

DIMPLE (*arching eyebrows*). Is that a fact?

ANDY. Yes, it is, an' nobody knows it better dan yo' do. Say, how do you like de idea ob Brass Buttons ridin' 'lone wid Miss Maud in a kerrige?

DIMPLE. Very much indeed.

ANDY. Yo' can bet when de blinds are pulled down dey gits mighty confidential.

DIMPLE. Do you really think so? That doesn't worry me. Can't you suggest something more interesting?

ANDY (*takes photo from pocket and holds it at arm's length in front of DIMPLE*). How does dat strike yo'?

DIMPLE (*surprised and angry*). Where did you get that?

ANDY (*chuckling*). Yo' an' Brass Buttons posed fur it. I'se got a hundred an' twenty-four more ob yo'r courtin', hug-me-tight, lap-warmin' and kissin' scenes.

DIMPLE (*trying to snatch photo*). Give me that.

ANDY (*springing aside*). No, yo' don't. Some ob de huggin' an' kissin' scenes am so nat'ral an' fetchin' dey make a feller feel funny jest to look at dem. (*Chuckles*.)

DIMPLE (*uneasy*). What do you intend doing with them?

ANDY (*coolly*). Sellin' 'em. Dey'll be fust-rate fur breach o' promise suits an' advertising purposes. Picture man Black offered twenty-five dollars fur five ob de commonest ones.

DIMPLE (*enraged*). Have you been showing them around town?

ANDY. Only to a few pussonal friends. I 'tends to show dem to Brass Buttons to-night an' tax him a hundred an' twenty-five dollars fur de whole kit. A man dats worth ten thousand dollars, an' can't 'ford to pay dat sum to save his own r'spect an' de gal's feelin's dat he 'tends to marry next week—

DIMPLE. What do you know about that?

ANDY. Heard ebbery word ob de compact, seed de afterclap, an' lost my breakfast. I had a picture ob de scene jest after yo' says "yes." (*Feels in pocket*). Like to see it?

DIMPLE (*furiously*). No, but I would like to see you buried twenty feet deep in a grave, with a forty ton stone on top of you to hold you down!

ANDY. No doubt ob it, but I don't 'tend to kick de bucket 'fore gittin' my price out ob Brass Buttons, or you both am made de laughin' stock ob de whole town. (*Abruptly*.) Say! yo'll want sum fixin's 'fore yo' changes yo' color. What do you say to collectin' my claim 'ginst Brass Buttons an' pocketin' twenty-five dollars?

DIMPLE (*hotly*). I'll have nothing to do with your unprincipled scheming. I hope Mr. Green will thrash you soundly for your rascally conduct.

ANDY. Dar's no danger ob dat. He am too good a lawyer to risk a five-thousand dollar 'sault an' battery suit, an' de advertisin' dat would give my pictures, (*Slight pause*.) So you won't act as a go-between? (*Starts R.*) Good day, den.

DIMPLE. What are you going to do?

ANDY. Lock up de house, an' see de finish ob de Reber-Henry bout.

DIMPLE. Then I'm going, too. (*Quickly exeunt R. 1. E.*)

*Flats are drawn off disclosing*

SCENE 2.—*Same as SCENE 1, ACT 1. Door R. in F. is thrown open revealing HENRY.*

HENRY (*looking L. excited*). Step inside quickly, mother. We've not a moment to lose.

*Enter MOTHER GRUNDY followed by HENRY. Both are*

*intensely excited.* MOTHER G. *goes down C., removes hood and shawl and throws them over back of chair.* HENRY *quickly removes hat, tosses it R. on, floor, closes door and braces it with L. shoulder.*

HENRY. Now, let the demons enter if they dare, and I'll make them pay dearly for their whistle. (MOTHER G. *pulls up sleeves, runs up C. to R. of HENRY and places hands upon door.*)

REBER (*rattling door, loudly*). Open the door.

HENRY. Never, sir.

REBER. Force the door in, then, officers.

HENRY. They'll do it at the risk of their lives!

REBER. Have no fear of consequences. Do your duty, men. Now, all together! (*Door sways and creaks*). It yielded an inch that time. Now for another effort.

MOTHER G. (*frantically*). Don't you enter or I'll blow up the house!

HENRY (*speaks low, but with intense power*). Don't you dare attempt such a thing, mother!

REBER. Push, men, push! Never let it be said that the combined strength of three powerful men was inferior to that of a man and a woman. (*Assault is renewed with fury, HENRY and MOTHER G. resisting to their utmost, Door gradually opens.*)

REBER (*exultantly*). It's yielding! Victory will soon be ours!

HENRY. It will be dearly bought. Mind what I tell you. (HENRY and MOTHER G. *are gradually forced back and officers enter.* HENRY *pushes MOTHER G. slightly R. and door flies wide open.*)

HENRY (*quickly*). Run for your life, mother! (MOTHER G. *runs up C. stands back of chair facing door.*)

*Enter REBER quickly, goes L. C.*

REBER (*to officers*). Seize that man (indicating HENRY) and handcuff him (*Officers start for HENRY who knocks down Number 1 and grapples with Number 2. Number 1 springs to his feet and closes in with HENRY. a fierce struggle ensues.*)

REBER (*excitedly*). Secure him at all hazards!

MOTHER G. (*screaming*). Help! Help! Fight for your life, Charlie. I'll help you, my boy. (*Starts up C.*)

REBER (*intercepting her*). No, you won't. I'll attend to your case. (*Engages MOTHER G. in a tussle who fights savagely and keeps REBER busy. Officers force HENRY to knees, seize his arms, raise them and try to handcuff him. MOTHER G. notices their action.*)

MOTHER G. Help! Help!

*Enter BILL quickly through open door R. in F.*

BILL (*strongly*). It's here! (*Seizes one officer and throws him up in L. corner, the other one L. C.*)

MOTHER G. (*wildly*). Ha—ha—ha! The tables are turned. (REBER *half turns R., is startled. MOTHER G. notices his action and with a spring and a yell clutches him around throat and*



chokes him. HENRY and officers rise. BILL retreats R., MOTHER G. shakes REBER furiously, who sinks to knees, appears strangling.) Die! foul robber! Die!

HENRY (*rushing C.*). My God, mother, don't kill him. (*Frankly seizes MOTHER G's hands, forces her to release hold upon REBER'S neck, and pushes her down R. C. Officer at L. C. springs to REBER'S side, helps him to rise and supports him while partially recovering. A slight pause.*)

REBER (*to officers, speaks with difficulty*). Arrest that hyena there (*Indicating MOTHER G. and HENRY*) and her cub. (*Officers start to cross R.*)

BILL (*picking up chair and intercepting them*). Attempt it and I'll brain you both! (*Officers hesitate.*)

*Enter GREEN and MAUD excitedly door in F. Stand up C.*

BILL (*strongly to officers*). You are without authority here—out of your jurisdiction; are nothing more than plain citizens in the eye of the law, and Henry would be justified in killing you were you to attempt to carry out Mr. Reber's commands.

GREEN. Anthony speaks the truth. This is Mr. Henry's castle, and no officer dare enter here except at the risk of his life without a properly executed warrant of arrest. (*To officers.*) You have usurped your powers. There is the door; get out at once or I'll assist you in leaving. (*Officers sheepishly but quickly exeunt door in F.*)

REBER (*angrily*). I shall secure a warrant and have it served by a constable at once. (*Starts up.*)

BILL. If you do, after what that man has done for you (*indicating HENRY*) you'll deserve hanging.

HENRY (*quickly*). One moment, Mr. Reber, please. (*REBER stops.*) Let me beg of you to cease troubling mother. She has suffered too much already at your hands, and any further persecution of her I fear will cause me to become a criminal.

REBER. You talk in riddles, man. I never harmed your mother.

HENRY (*hotly*). You are responsible for her present wretched mental condition,

REBER. Impossible! I never saw her until she entered my house to-day to murder me. How could I be guilty of what you charge?

HENRY. Your treachery, deceit (*strongly*) aye, downright robbery, caused it.

REBER (*angrily*). That's strong language to use. I'll make you prove it.

*Enter ANDY and DIMPLE quietly door R. in F. stand well up.*

HENRY. I will do it. Listen. At your father's death it was found that every dollar that he possessed was invested in farming lands. His will directed that his property be divided—acre for acre—between yourself and your brother's widow. As sole execu-



tor of your father's will you appropriated every acre of known value and offered your brother's widow barren worthless tracts of land, rich only in sedge grass and green briars. Your contemptible action so incensed her that she refused to accept a foot of land under the will, and vowed her son should not retain the name you had so disgraced. Adopting that of her foster-brother she passed completely out of your life. What wounded her more than anything else was your demand that she give up to you the farm she then occupied with its sacred associations, and which had always been considered in the light of a gift to her husband by your father, though no deed had been given for it. She could not understand your heartless motives then, but was informed afterward that you had been secretly advised that the property held rich iron ore deposits. From that tract of land, *unjustly wrung from a widow, you have amassed your present wealth.* Do you deny these statements?

REBER (*L. of chair back of table*). Who are you?

HENRY. The son of the widow you wronged, the only child of your brother. A Reber by birth, but a poor mechanic through the avarice of an unprincipled scoundrel. (*All are startled except GREEN and MOTHER G., whose features depict intense excitement.*)

REBER (*grasping back of chair*). Can it be possible?

GREEN. He speaks the truth, Mr. Reber. As his attorney I've had occasion the past week, in the preparation of an action-at-law about to be brought against you, to verify the statements just made you.

HENRY (*pointing to MOTHER G.*). There stands the widow of your brother who idolized you while living. Brooding over your injustice partially unbalanced her mind and wrecked her life. Look! Behold the result of your infamous scheming! Now ask yourself if your ill-gotten wealth be worth the price of that immortal soul! (*REBER looks at MOTHER G. a moment, then bows head, appears conscience smitten.*) If it be true that the spirits of our departed ones hover over us and are aware of passing events, what must be—(*brokenly*) the feelings of your father and brother as they look down upon this scene. (*Slightly bows head.*)

REBER (*as he sinks to chair*). This is a terrible, terrible retribution! The heinousness of my sin overwhelms me. (*Bows head upon table.*) In a moment of temptation I lost all sense of honor, betrayed the confidence placed in me by my father, fell a victim to the sordid lust of wealth, and wrecked a human life! My God! My punishment is greater than I can bear! Have mercy, have mercy!

MAUD (*goes down C, lays hand upon REBER'S shoulder, speaks feelingly*). He will if you *prove* your repentance by making restitution for your sins. I have been assured that such action on your part would restore your sister's reason. Is not this the time to try it? (*GREEN goes down L. C.*)

REBER (*rises, speaks with emotion*). Yes, it shall be done. (MOTHER G. *looks at REBER, features depicting intense excitement*). Before the day closes she shall be in full possession of the old home farm with its mines, and have ten-fold added to what she was entitled to at father's death.

MOTHER G. (*advancing a step towards REBER, eagerly*). Do you mean that? Will you do it for sure? Oh, don't trifle with me!

REBER (*elevating arm*). As God is my witness, I'll do it.

MOTHER G. (*turning to HENRY joyously*). Did you hear that, Charlie? (*Places hands upon head*). The weight is lifting off, my brain, light is shining in where darkness reigned! Oh, Charlie we'll be so happy! (*Advancing with outstretched arms springs into CHARLIE'S embrace, and lies sobbing upon his bosom.*)

HENRY. God be praised!

REBER. To you, Charlie, I'll hand over my mills with sufficient funds to start them up to-morrow, upon a co-operative or any other plan you and your men may agree upon.

HENRY (*quickly*). How about Anthony and the other men who attacked you?

REBER. They are forgiven, and need fear no harm from me, (*Extending arms and looking upward.*) Now, may I hope for Thy forgiveness? REBER C., HENRY and MOTHER G. R. of C., MAUD *slightly to R.*, of REBER, GREEN L. C., DIMPLE *up L. C.*, ANDY *up C.*, BILL *up R. C.*

#### QUICK DROP.

*If preferred, the following ending may be used.*

HENRY (*quickly*). How about Anthony and the other men who attacked you?

REBER. They are forgiven, and need fear no harm from me. (*A hum of excited voices momentarily becoming louder and nearer heard off R. and L. U. E.*)

REBER (*terrified*). Hark! What mean those sounds? Mob law again! (*Sounds of men running and voices heard: "Succor for HENRY!" "The Union forever!" "Death to the Steel King," repeating over and over, ever nearer, until the sounds become a mighty roar, REBER faces door in F. All gather around him forming a half-circle facing up. MAUD and MOTHER G. front of REBER; GREEN, DIMPLE and ANDY front of MAUD, and MOTHER G., HENRY and BILL in front of them with chairs in their hands.*)

*Enter men excitedly door R. in F. jostling each other and yelling frantically: "There he is," "Mob him," "He's good for a swing this time," etc., etc., Men rush down C. BILL and HENRY raise chairs aloft.*

BILL (*defiantly*). Back with you, boys, back! (*Leaders recoil up L. Space between BILL and door is quickly filled with yelling,*

*excited men armed with ropes, clubs, and all sorts of implements as though caught up on the spur of the moment. Have sufficient men to fill stage and block doorway.)*

BILL (*mounting chair*). Don't a mother's son of you lay a hand on Mr. Reber. He's surrendered! (*Thrillingly*). Handed his mills over to Henry and they *start up to-morrow, full blast. boys!* Three cheers for the Steel King, and a tiger for Henry and his mother! Hip, hip—(*Cheers are heartily given with demonstrations of great joy.*)

QUICK DROP.

CURTAIN.

## NEW PLAYS.

**JOHN BRAG, DECEASED.** 25 cents. A farce in 4 acts, by GORDON V. MAY. 8 male, 5 female characters. Time of playing, 2½ hours. *Brag*, a rather sporty old fellow, to save himself from financial ruin, pretends to be dead, and this leads to all kinds of comic complications. The characters are all good, and there is nothing slow in the piece. A certain success.

**STEEL KING, The.** 25 cents. A 4-act comedy-drama, by HORACE C. DALE. 5 male, 3 female characters, with non-speaking parts for policemen, a child, soldiers and mob. Runs 2½ hours. This is a play with a bright future before it. Written along the lines of "Strife," combining its heart interest, soul-stirring situations, brisk action and mirth-provoking incidents, it is sure to become as great a favorite. Its clairvoyant and hypnotic scenes are cleverly wrought out climaxes of intense interest; while the mob scene is a masterpiece of dramatic construction, thrillingly realistic, arousing unbounded enthusiasm. This is no part play. Every character is given a chance to display good, effective work, and enter largely into the development of a strong absorbing plot, ever increasing in interest until the final drop of curtain. A fine leading woman, a noble mechanic, a wealthy mill owner, an outspoken union man, a deceptive lawyer, an eccentric woman character, an exceptionally good soubrette, an uproariously fun-provoking dandy, constitutes the cast, with soldiers, singers, mob, policemen, etc., as adjuncts. The act endings are strong; stage pictures, effective. Can be produced in any hall, and is heartily recommended by its author as one of his best plays.

**PAIR OF IDIOTS, A.** 15 cents. An up-to-date society comedy in 2 acts, by E. M. CRANE. 3 male, 3 female characters. Time of playing, 2 hours. Replete with bright and witty dialogue and telling situations. A stupid will makes it necessary for two young people to act the part of idiots in order to secure their freedom. Two bright girls and an old maid bring an irascible Colonel and two younger men to terms. The plot is excellent, and the piece is bound to be a great success, being especially recommended to companies who have already produced the author's other plays.

**CASE OF HERR BAR ROOMSKI CONEYISKEY, The.** (An Anarchist.) 15 cents. A new Mock Trial, by HARRY E. SHELLAND. 15 male, 1 female (usually played by a male) characters, jurors, etc. The latest and most amusing mock trial published. Good Tramp, French, German, Irish, Negro and Jew parts. Plays a whole evening.

**MAJOR ABORN'S PROPOSAL.** 15 cents. A comedy in 1 act. 3 male, 2 female characters. 1 interior scene. Time of playing, 45 minutes. A very charming little play, giving none of the characters special prominence, each being good. Particularly recommended as a curtain raiser.

**CRUSHED TRAGEDIAN, A.** 15 cents. By WILLIAM SIDNEY HILLYER. A character monologue for male comedian. Depicts the reminiscences and tribulations of "the palmy days" by one of "the old school." Runs about 15 minutes. Especially recommended.

**WAKE AT O'GRADY'S, The.** 15 cents. By WILLIAM SIDNEY HILLYER. A monologue for an Irish character comedian. Runs 15 minutes. Besides the "wake," *Mr. Dugan* tells all about the christening at McGuire's. Especially recommended.

**SQUIRE THOMPKINS' DAUGHTER.** 25 cents. A drama in 5 acts, by ARTHUR L. BUZZELL. 5 male, 2 female characters. Time of playing, 2½ hours. The action turns on a cunningly devised plot involving forgery, mock-marriage and mortgage-foreclosure; a revengeful attempt to ruin the *Squire* and his family, but happily frustrated at the last moment by the unmasking of the two conspirators. Absorbingly thrilling in every act.

**EDWARDS, THE SPY. 25 cents.** A drama in 5 acts, by ARTHUR L. BUZZELL. 10 male, 4 female characters. Civil and military costumes. Time, 2½ hours. A brilliant episode of the Civil War, in which the reckless daring and hair-breadth escapes of *Edwards* succeed in baffling a revengeful plot to destroy him.

**MAIDENS ALL FORLORN. 15 cents.** A comedy in 3 acts and 1 scene, by EVELYN SIMMS. 6 female characters. Scene, a parlor in a seaside cottage. Time, 1¼ hours. Three young girls chafing under the monotony of a man-forsaken resort, write *Teddy* to come and visit them. *Teddy* cannot come, but answers that his friend *Dr. Jocelyn Denby* will come and help while away the time. Great preparations are made for his reception, including much interest by a *Maiden Aunt*. Each prepares a present to bestow on the *Doctor*, and feigns an ailment to interest him. The *Doctor* arrives—a woman. The climax, deftly worked out, is sprung on the audience at the last moment, and insures the play a complete success. The characters are all good, the *Maiden Aunt* and *Mrs. Maloney* are great character parts.

**PICKLES AND TICKLES. 15 cents.** A negro farce in 1 act, by THOMAS BARNES. 6 male characters. No scenery required. Runs 20 minutes unless specialties are introduced—by means of which the piece can be lengthened to suit. *Pickles* and *Tickles* are rival dealers in second-hand clothes. Their quarrels, the pranks played by two live dummies and the comicalities of *Overanxious* and *The Parson's* ghost afford ample opportunity to keep the audience in a whirlwind of mirth.

**NOAH'S ARK, Jr. 15 cents.** A farce in 1 act, by SAMUEL EMERY. 4 male, 3 female characters. Parlor scenes, modern costumes. Plays 45 minutes. A genuinely funny piece which satirizes the maudlin love for animals that is displayed by some owners of pets. A profane parrot and a young curate just out of the seminary sustain a series of complications that culminate in a half-hitched wedding. No love-making. Characters, dialogue, situations and "business" are novel and mirth-provoking. The piece will play itself, and please everybody.

**SLIM JIM AND THE HOODOO. 15 cents.** A negro farce in 1 act, by THOS. BARNES. 5 male characters. The scene is laid in a grocery-store. Full of jokes, and abounding in comic "business." The grocer, a tough customer, a deacon with a weakness for "craps," a crank with patents on the brain, and a fat policeman keep up a succession of laughs that end in an explosion which will make the audience ache. Specialties can be introduced. The piece will run 30 minutes if played "straight."

**THE GYPSY QUEEN. 25 cents.** A drama in 4 acts, by HORACE C. DAI E. 5 male, 3 female characters, with non-speaking parts to represent Gypsies and picnickers. Runs 2½ hours. In its romantic interest and simple yet effective scope for pretty stage pictures, this play is comparable to the same author's "Imogene: or, the Witch's Secret," which has proved conspicuously successful. Leading woman and man are the principal parts. There is an excellent light comedy (male), a good ingénue to work with the light comedy, a dude comedy part, and a comedy parson who looks like a cowboy evangelist. The villain and Gypsy woman will give fine chances for effective emotional acting. Besides a compact, dramatic plot and picturesque atmosphere, the piece possesses a number of sensational scenic effects that are entirely new. With its abundance of bright comedy stirring incidents, and realistic situations, this play will appeal strongly to the popular taste. It is within the range of ordinary dramatic clubs, and can be staged in any hall.

**MEN, MAIDS AND MATCHMAKERS. 15 cents.** A society comedy in 3 acts, by E. M. CRANE. 4 male, 4 female characters. Costumes of the day. One interior scene. Time of playing, 2 hours. Sparkles with wit and interest—also with human nature. Some bachelor-girls keep bachelors' hall in a New York apartment; some bachelors of the other sex appear on the scene; some matchmakers settle the whole business. True comedy, without any love-making; novel and clever situations; sprightly dialogue; characters all "stars"; act endings snappy and surprising. The plot hinges on a well-played practical joke. The audience, waiting to learn what will happen next, is kept in suspense till the end. The piece is of the same grade as the same author's "Just for Fun," is staged with equal ease, and is recommended to the great number of clubs that have already produced the latter play.



## HORACE C. DALE'S PLAYS



Each of these plays has achieved a pronounced success. They are all specially suitable for amateur production, and they have all been produced by amateurs throughout the United States. Some of them do not *read* well—very many good acting plays do not—but they are all thoroughly *well-built*, and they invariably *act* well. Dramatic clubs can do no better than to produce all of them, from time to time, using other plays by other authors between times. Detailed descriptions will be found in appropriate alphabetical order in the body of this catalogue.



**BREAKING HIS BONDS.** (25 cents.) A comedy-drama in 4 acts. 6 male, 3 female characters.

*"We had a full house each night, and the audiences were highly pleased. We consider it among the best plays we have given."*—F. E. KENNEDY (Ill.).

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*"It was an unparalleled success. PETE was funnier than ever, and the much-married DEACON simply brought down the house. People laughed till they cried. The play scored a hit that will be hard to equal in the future."*—A. A. MURPHREE (Florida).

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*"The audience was delighted with it."*—LEON A. DAVIS (Delaware).



**THE GYPSY QUEEN (New).** (25 cents.) A drama in 4 acts, by HORACE C. DALE. 5 male, 3 female characters, with non-speaking parts to represent Gypsies and picnickers. Runs 2½ hours. In its romantic interest and simple yet effective scope for pretty stage pictures, this play is comparable to the same author's "Imogene; or the Witch's Secret," which has proved conspicuously successful. Leading woman and man are the principal parts. There is an excellent light comedy (male), a good ingénue to work with the light comedy, a dude comedy part, and a comedy parson who looks like a cowboy evangelist. The villain and Gypsy woman will give fine chances for effective emotional acting. Besides a compact, dramatic plot and picturesque atmosphere, the piece possesses a number of sensational scenic effects that are entirely new. With its abundance of bright comedy, stirring incidents, and realistic situations, this play will appeal strongly to the popular taste. It is within the range of ordinary dramatic clubs, and can be staged in any hall.



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